worthy to compete for this great work, on the following liberal terms:—each competitor received, besides his expenses, a fair indemnity for his labour for one year; the subject proposed was the sacrifice of Isaac, and at the end of the year each artist was required to give in a design, executed in bronze, of the same size as one of the compartments of the old gate, *i.e.*, about 2 feet square.

"There were thirty-four judges, principally artists, some natives of Florence, and some strangers; each was obliged to give his vote in public, and to state at the same time the reasons by which his vote was justified." Vasari gives the names of the seven competitors: the successful one was Lorenzo Ghiberti. "When the works were compared in public, it was found that only three of them combined the various merits of composition, design, and delicacy of workmanship; these three were Brunelleschi, Donatella, and Ghiberti. The suffrages seemed to be divided; but after a short pause, and the exchange of a few whispered words, Donatella and Brunelleschi withdrew, generously agreeing and proclaiming aloud that Lorenzo had excelled them all, and that to him belonged the prize; and this judgment, as honourable to themselves as to their rival, was confirmed amid the acclamations of the assembly. This gate was twenty-one years in completing, and was said by Michaelangelo, in his own emphatic, and perhaps extravagant language, to be "worthy to be the gate of Paradise." * * *

After recent proceedings, all overtures will be received with great caution from our Government. We have still, however, a wide field open for the exercise of professional skill among the intelligent ranks of our trading fellow-countrymen. It is to the *country in general* we must turn our attention; and happily for the position of art in England the task at present will be that of directing and assisting to maturity taste which already exists to a considerable extent. In this respect the present day is as promising as any which has preceded it, for among the wealthy merchants of our land I am happy to know that a feeling of the most favourable kind exists, and that the vapid knowledge which shewed itself till lately among the collectors of works of art in this country, is fast disappearing: for it consisted only in the acquisition of a few technical phrases by which they could descant upon the gloomy mysteries with which they had covered their walls, and while they talked of "silvery tones," and "melting distances," and all the other cant of connoisseurship, knew nothing of the real excellence of art, nor felt any sympathy with those who laboured to give it an intellectual and moral bias.

We are in the habit of referring to the Medici as the best examples of enlightened and judicious patrons, but let us bear in mind that the Medici were merchantmen, and if they were the merchant princes of *their* times, England has her merchant princes too, men as liberal in their views, as elevated in their tastes, as noble in their sentiments—many of whom have already expressed an intelligent interest in the welfare of art, and seek its permanent success, while others are waiting only the talismanic touch that is to awaken them to a clear appreciation of its high claims. Let us, however, rightly understand the Medician patronage. It was a patronage like that which Pericles offered to the Grecian artists, and which acted in sympathy with the public feeling, for it was in the height of their citizen power, when they felt *with* the people, *like* the people, *as* the people, that the Medici commissioned Raphael, and allotted the walls of the Florentine council chamber to the pencils of Buonarotti and Da Vinci. I do not for a moment use these terms in the modern political sense; I mean only that the safest and most lasting patronage will be that which arises from an intelligent knowledge of art, and an acquaintance with the artists.

Before closing this part of my subject, it may be expected that, having spoken of Government [illegible] I should make some observations on that peculiar patronage and aid art can derived from the combined efforts of the community in general—I mean the ART-UNIONS; the operations of which are altogether peculiar to our own times. The consideration of this subject, to do it justice, would require of itself a whole paper,—I will therefore only attempt an allusion to the subject, as the council of the Institute are about to invite attention to the present position of these societies. They have been, I do not hesitate to say, more instrumental in communicating a knowledge and love of art among the mixed masses of the community than any other means that have ever been employed; and I feel sure that the benefits that have already arisen from their operation are much more extensive than the profession themselves are generally aware.

It is so difficult a thing in a country as commercial in its spirit, as England has ever been, to draw public attention to the subject of the arts, and keep it there,—that if the promulgators and committees of these associations had effected no other benefits, this would have been sufficient to entitle them to the lasting gratitude of every member of the profession. How much more then when we consider the variety and extent of the benefits to which they have given rise; for by the periodical and accidental distribution of works of art throughout the country, they have deposited in many a rural district and in many a provincial town so many silent witnesses for art, which have, in numerous instances, aroused a taste that has resulted in the formation of some of the very best private collections. They have thus considerably increased *private patronage*. To this I will only add, that the direct assistance they have given to the artists, themselves has not only been to the *young*, who have to struggle with the first difficulties of their precarious profession, nor to the *advanced*, who have not yet overcome those difficulties,—but it is a peculiarly gratifying feature of their usefulness, that they offer their help to those who have, it may be, outlived their reputation, and who, having toiled through the long summer day of life, have found that, when their popularity was on the wane, and the favours of fashion were being withdrawn from them, they might have been left to pass their last few years in privation and want, but for the opportunity thus afforded them of disposing of the works they are still able to produce. All honour, then, to those who introduced them among us, who commenced and have continued their arduous and disinterested labours in the face of continued difficulty and annoyance, sustained, throughout, by no other motives than a desire to promote the prosperity of British artists, and the wide diffusion of British art!

It becomes, then, the important question, how we can arouse and extend that feeling throughout the empire which is necessary to maintain the steady growth and full development of British art. We want the patronage and support of those who feel that it is capable of exercising a beneficial influence over all classes of society, and over every department of trade and manufacture; we do not care for that interest in its welfare which ebbs and flows with the fluctuation of commercial prosperity on the one hand, or political power on the other. I do not attempt to draw any definite conclusions, or even to suggest any positive line of action; I merely throw before you these few remarks, with a view to ascertain the position we occupy in the great chain of art, and that we may not lose sight of its high purpose and aim. If I were to attempt a practical application of my remarks, I would ask if you do not discover, in this view of a subject in which we are all so deeply interested, the great necessity that exists for a unity of feeling and action among the great body of artists; if you do not feel how desirable it is that we should have in full and vigorous existence a society—such as, it is hoped, our own institute will become—which shall stand prepared to take cognisance of all questions bearing upon art, and to ward off every danger with which it may be threatened. It must occur, indeed, to every contemplative mind, that the aspect of the times, the unsettled condition of public affairs, and the uncertainty that everywhere prevails, are by no means favourable to the advancement of art. The nations of the world heave and swell like the billows of some stormy sea, and the minds of all thinking men are filled with apprehensions, which they can neither dispel nor define. What would become of art in the midst of long-continued political commotion I cannot pretend to say. It is a plant of tender growth, and flourishes best when nations are at peace; and though it might bend before the blast, and still retain its hold upon the soil, yet for a time its fruitfulness would be impaired, and its leaves and blossoms would be scattered and dispersed; while those who, like ourselves, have clustered under its shadow, would be left exposed to all the fury of the storm. We must wait in patience, however, the tide of public events, and hope, that as the prosperity of art is bound up in the prosperity of our country, both may remain uninjured and unscathed by the political whirlwind that is sweeping round us. In the meantime we must endeavour, each in our particular department, to invest our works with more than a superficial value, so that whether we tread the higher walks of religion, poetry, and history; whether we embody the events which belong to the progress of nations, or whether we confine ourselves to the humbler walks of familiar and domestic life, and the happy incidents of the cottage homes of our country, let it be the effort of each and all not only to *please* the eye, but to *impress* the mind; not only to "point a moral or adorn a tale," but to stamp religious and intellectual worth upon our productions, that they may tend "to mend the manners and improve the heart." It will then not be too much to hope, that as England has ever been the foremost in literature and science, the foremost in legislature in commerce and in war, the foremost in diffusing Christianity throughout the world, so she may also, as the patroness and protectress of the arts, maintain her triumphant position,—the foremost among the kingdoms of the earth!

T. F. MARSHALL.

UNWISE PROCEEDING OF THE GOVERNMENT IN RESPECT OF WORKS.

THE conduct of the ministers, particularly of the Board of Works, at this period, appears to us the most dangerous and unstatesmanlike that can be well conceived. At a time when private enterprise in building is effectually suspended, and both public and private works are rare, at this critical period, when tens of thousands of operatives are out of employ and their families are suffering every possible privation, the Board of Works also suspends the works of the Crown, and adds hundreds to the numbers of suffering workmen. The works at Buckingham Palace are, we believe, stopped; those at the Houses of Parliament considerably curtailed, and crowds of able, active, industrious, and worthy workmen turned adrift to starve. Can it, therefore, be matter of surprise if some discontent do exist? Men cannot starve, and see their wives and children struggling with all the privations of destitution, and not feel that their existence ought to be one of the cares of the Government. Here are works of necessity, of utility; works which bring into play the productions and skill of the country and hardy artisans; ought they to be discontinued, and the latter left to starve? If economy must be practised, let those who are receiving for nothing their thousands a year, be called upon to forego, in part, the increase to their riches. The Government, at all events, ought not to suspend active operations; they should set the example of executing useful works, and not thus paralyse the nerves upon which the happiness, nay the existence of the empire depends.

LEEDS SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—The exhibition of pupils' drawings has been highly spoken of in the local papers, and by crowds of visitors. There were 400 drawings. The school was opened little more than a year since, and it is said to be in a fair way to the accomplishment of its objects, namely, "the cultivation of the arts of designing, so as to make them applicable to the various manufactures of the town and neighbourhood; to improve and beautify the productions of the fancy clothier, the carpet-maker, the paper-stainer, the glass-manufacturer, the potter, the carver, the plasterer, &c., by raising the standard of taste amongst the consumers and purchasers of all such articles of use and decoration, and to cause an increased demand for the best productions of skill and industry."

To learn more about PDF Compression and OCR go to our website